

Post 7-27-71

Jury Expected to Get Mayday Test Case Today

A Superior Court jury will be asked to return a verdict today in a test case involving the arrest of Mayday antiwar protestors on the steps of the U.S. Capitol.

The jury of 11 women and one man is to decide the guilt or innocence of eight of about 1,000 protestors, all of whom were charged with disorderly parading and unlawful entry at the Capitol on May 5.

The verdict is expected to have a decisive impact on prosecution of 800 other demonstrators, whose trials have been postponed pending the outcome of this case. Previously charges were dropped against more than 100.

In a closing argument yesterday in the trial before Judge Stanley Harris, Assistant U.S. attorney Luke C. Moore pictured the protestors as having been "a noisy crowd" chanting antiwar slogans and interfering with office routine inside the Capitol.

The four defense attorneys, on the other hand, pictured

the demonstrators as high-minded peaceful protestors who had assembled at the invitation of members of Congress and had carried out their constitutional right to "petition for redress of grievances."

Moore emphasized that the jury should not consider the demonstrators' concern with war, racism, and other issues but only focus on whether the group had broken a statute forbidding demonstrators on the Capitol grounds without permission of authorities. The statute has been interpreted as one which allows peaceful gatherings.

Defense attorney Monroe Freedman countered that the antiwar protestors were victims of "selective enforcement" of the law because of their political views. Maintaining that the group had been no more disruptive than are tourists normally, he accused the government of "telling these people here that they cannot do what others can freely do."